

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 EB-11 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01

DRC-01 /146 W

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R 171843Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5522

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 32185

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, NATO, MARR

SUBJ: FRANCE AND THE EUROGROUP

1. SUMMARY: GOF OFFICIAL OPPOSITION TO FRENCH ASSOCIATION  
WITH EUROGROUP REMAINS STRONG. GROUWING ECONOMIC PRESSURES  
ASSOCIATED WITH DESIRE OF FRENCH INDUSTRY TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE  
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IN EUROPEAN ARMS MARKET, HOWEVER, ARE KEEPING EUROGROUP ISSUE

ALIVE, WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE EARLY CHANGE IN FRENCH REJECTION OF EUROGROUP, BUT WE SEE SEVERAL FACTORS THAT COULD MAKE FRENCH ASSOCIATION INCREASINGLY MORE ATTRACTIVE TO GOF. END SUMMARY.

2. GOF ATTITUDE TOWARD FRENCH ASSOCIATION WITH EUROGROUP REFLECTS CONTRADICTION SO PREVALENT IN OTHER FRENCH POLICIES TOWARD EUROPE: DESIRE TO PROTECT LEGACY OF GAULLIST INDEPENDENCE WHILE SEEKING BENEFITS OF MORE UNITED EUROPE BUILT ACCORDING TO FRENCH SPECIFICATIONS.

3. ECONOMIC PRESSURES ARE MOUNTING ON GOF TO ESTABLISH SOME RELATIONSHIP WITH EUROGROUP. SEVERAL SOURCES REPORT THAT DEFENSE MINISTRY TECHNICIANS AND FRENCH ARMS PRODUCERS HAVE BEEN URGING MINISTER OF ARMED FORCES GALLEY TO INSURE THAT FRANCE IS NOT EXCLUDED FROM MAJOR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT AND PROCUREMENT PROGRAMS WHICH MIGHT BE CENTERED IN EUROGROUP. THESE PRESSURES PROBABLY WERE ALSO BEHIND 1972 INITIATIVE OF THEN FRENCH DEFENSE MINISTER DEBRE TO REINVIGORATE WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION (WEU) AS FORUM FOR ORGANIZING JOINT PROCUREMENT PROJECTS, A GAMBIT WHICH, IF SUCCESSFUL, WOULD HAVE PERMITTED THE FRENCH TO OBTAIN THE SAME ECONOMIC BENEFITS OFFERED BY EUROGROUP MEMBERSHIP WITHOUT PAYING WHAT GOF PERCEIVES AS SUBSTANTIAL PSYCHIC PRICE (I.E., VISIBLE REASSOCIATION WITH NATO'S MILITARY, STRUCTURE). FONMIN JOBERT RENEWED THE DEBRE SCHEME DURING RECENT WEU ASSEMBLY SESSION (PARIS 30340, PARA 7).

4. GROWING PRESSURE IN FUTURE TO DIVERT FUNDS FROM ALREADY MINIMAL DEFENSE BUDGET TOWARD OTHER DOMESTIC USES, COMBINED WITH PROBABLY SLACKENING OF FRENCH ECONOMY IN COMING MONTHS DUE TO ENERGY CRISIS, WILL COMBINE TO SHOULD MAKE IT EVEN MORE COMPELLING FOR GOF TO FIND RATIONAL WAYS TO MINIMIZE MILITARY PROCUREMENT COSTS AND MAXIMIZE PRODUCTION AND SALES OF FRENCH ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY IN EUROPE -- AS WELL AS ELSEWHERE.

5. ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS SUPPORTING FRENCH MEMBERSHIP IN EUROGROUP HAVE ALSO BEEN RAISED PUBLICLY IN FRENCH PARLIAMENT. UDR(GAULLIST) DEPUTY LE THEULE, REAPPORTUEUR FOR FINANCE COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATION OF FRENCH DEFENSE BUDGET, CONFIDENTIAL

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SAID IN HIS RECENT REPORT TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: "FROM AN INDUSTRIAL POINT OF VIEW, (FRENCH) PARTICIPATION IN EUROPGROUP UNQUESTIONABLY WOULD BE ADVANTAGEOUS. ARE THERE INSURMOUNTABLE POLITICAL PROBLEMS? I THINK NOT, AND IT WOULD BE GOOD TO REVIEW OUR POSITION AND, SINCE DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN TO US, US, TO CONSIDER JOINING THIS ASSOCIATION UNDER CONDITIONS THAT WOULD CONFORM TO OUR DECLARED POLICY OF NOT PARTICIPATING IN NATO'S INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES."

THIS STATEMENT IS NOTEWORTHY NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF ITS FAVORABLE STTITUDE TOWARD THE EUROGROUP, BUT BECAUSE IT CAME FROM A UDR MEMBER.

6. IN SPITE OF ECONOMIC DESIRABILITY OF JOINGNG EUROGROUP, TRADITIONAL GAULLIST POLICY AGAINST ASSOCIATION WITH NATO'S INTEGRATED MILITARY SYSTEM CONTINUES TO POSE A COMMANDING OBSTACLE. DEBRE, KEEPER OF THE GAULLIST FLAME, RECENTLY DIRECTED WRITTEN QUESTION OF TO MINISTER GALLEY SUPPORTING FRANCE'S REJECTION OF EUROGROUP MEMBERSHIP, FORCING GALLEY TO REAFFIRM THAT "REINTEGRATION WITH NATO HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR FRANCE'S ARMED FORCES WHICH HAVE ACQUIRED OVER THE PAST FIVE OR SIX YEARS A GREATER FREEDOM OF ACTION. WE HAVE MADE STRUCTURE OF FRENCH FORCES COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT." INTENTIONALLY OR NOT, HOWEVER, GALLEY'S STATEMENT DID NOT SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDE FUTURE FRENCH ASSOCIATION WITH EUROGROUP.

7. NEVERTHELESS, RESTRAINTS ON EUROGROUP ISSUE REMAIN INTACT AND UNDER CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF POMPIDOU SHOULD DECIDE TO MOVE FRANCE TOWARD EUROGROUP IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

8. TWO FACTORS MIGHT CHANGE THIS. FIRST, SHOULD EUROGROUP DEVELOP INTO REAL FOCAL POINT FOR MAJOR EUROPEAN PROCUREMENT PROGRAMS (E.G. , REPLACEMENT FOR F-104) AND IF FRENCH PERCEIVE THAT THEY WOULD HAVE GOOD CHANCE FOR CUT OF THAT PIE, ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS MIGHT BECOME SUFFICIENTLY ATTRACTIVE TO LURE FRENCH INTO SOME FORM OF ASSOCIATION WITH EUROGROUP, PERHAPS SELECTING INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS ON AN AD HOC BASIS ON THE OTHER HAND, TO EXTENT FRANCE CAN ACHIEVE ECONOMIC GOALS THROUGH BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS (E.G. AS DESRIBED IN BRUSSELS 7280), GOF WILL BE UNDER LESS PRESSURE TO MOVE TOWARD EUROGROUP.  
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SECOND, SHOULD GOF DECIDE TO GO BEYOND SIMPLY AND REPEATEDLY "POSING THE QUESTION OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE", AND MOVE AGGRESSIVELY TOWARD ORGANIZING THAT DEFENSE, AND IF OTHER ROUTES (E.G. , WEU OR EC FORUM) ARE CLOSED TO THEM, FRENCH MIGHT TURN TO EUROGROUP AS CHANNEL FOR THEIR ENERGIES. OF THE TWO FACTORS, LATTER IS BY FAR THE LESS LIKELY IN OUR VIEW, AT LEAST IN NEAR TERMS. IRWIN

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